



# MT. CULMEN CLARION

## A Newsletter of Mt. Culmen EC Church

*"What I tell you in the dark, say in the light;  
and what you hear whispered, shout from the rooftops!"*

**Volume 7 - Issue 3 - March 2024**

**Pastor**

Rev. Jonathan J. Brown  
717-205-6532

**Lay Delegate**

Rebekah Brown

**Alternate Lay Delegate**

Kenneth Bannon

**Board President**

Floyd Mast

**Board Vice President**

Delrea Ream

**Board Secretary**

Sharon Mast

**Church Treasurer**

Esther Stauffer

**Trustees:**

Floyd Mast  
Barry Ream  
David Rissler

**Stewards:**

Esther Stauffer  
Joyce Garber  
Kim Sweigart  
Debra Brubaker

**Members-at-Large:**

Sharon Mast  
Delrea Ream



### Deathly Danger and Burning Bovines

— Rev. Jonathan Brown

Since we took a few months off from our study of the Book of Numbers, we might need a quick review. The Book of Numbers tells the story of Israel's journey from Mt. Sinai to the borders of the Promised Land. The early chapters portray the way Israel's camp is organized carefully around the Tabernacle, a sign of how well-ordered their society is supposed to be, with holiness at its heart. In Numbers 10, they finally pick up and leave the Sinai plateau – and soon they promptly start whining and grumbling about how unhappy they are. Moses has to put up with a lot: the protests of the people (ch. 11); trouble from his own brother and sister (ch. 12); and a major rebellion through which an entire generation forfeits the right to enter the Promised Land (chs. 13-14).

To give Israel renewed hope, the LORD speaks through Moses and gives them some laws which very pointedly remind them that they will one day receive the promises. The last of these laws tells each of them to wear a little bit of the priestly colors in their cloaks, as a visual reminder of their holy calling (ch. 15). But immediately, some people twist this gift, claiming an equal right to the priestly office. A Levite named Korah leads yet another rebellion on those grounds, and pays dearly (ch. 16). While Moses attempted to excuse Israel as just misled and deceived, they promptly voice their support for the dead Korah and form a mob against Moses and Aaron. When a plague breaks out against their evil, only Aaron the High Priest can stand and ward off death via worship.

To bring Israel back in line, God performs a miracle – making Aaron's dead staff come to life and bear fruit in his presence – as a sign to once and for all show Israel whom he has chosen (ch. 17). Israel, true to form, laments that there's now no way for them to approach God in worship (17:12). In answer, God clarifies the careful system he made that assigned special responsibilities to Aaron's family and to the Levites (ch. 18). In it, God makes clear that he takes holiness seriously. Only certain people are to do certain jobs, touch certain things, eat certain food. There are rules; there is an order.

With those questions settled, where does that leave Israel? They're still camped out in the desert. What's worse, because of Israel's rebellion, the plague had invaded the camp. While Aaron stopped it, *"those who died in the plague were 14,700, besides those who died in the affair of Korah"* (16:49). In certain parts of the camp, you couldn't get far without running into a body that used to be living but is now dead. And so God spends this chapter giving Israel a way to cope with the heavy significance of death.

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**Mount Culmen Evangelical Congregational Church**

**1885 Turkey Hill Road, East Earl, PA 17519**

**Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00 AM**



Please visit us online at  
[facebook.com/MtCulmenEC](https://facebook.com/MtCulmenEC)

## **Board Meeting Notes (February 2024)**

Last month, the Official Board of Mt. Culmen Evangelical Congregational Church convened its meeting after the worship service on Sunday, February 4, 2024, to conduct the business of the church. In attendance at the meeting were 12 members of our church board: Floyd Mast, Sharon Mast, Del Ream, Barry Ream, Kim Sweigart, Esther Stauffer, Joyce Garber, Dave Rissler, Debra Brubaker, Rev. Jonathan Brown, and Rebekah Brown.

Opening with prayer and roll call, the board heard the customary reports.

Of these, the treasurer's report submitted by Esther Stauffer noted:

- January 2024 income of \$2,876.00
- January 2024 expenses of \$6,478.62
- a January 31 ending balance of \$6,047.31

The secretary's report was accepted unanimously on the motion of Kim Sweigart, seconded by Dave Rissler.

The treasurer's report was accepted unanimously on the motion of Rebekah Brown, seconded by Kim Sweigart.

The stewards had no report. However, Pastor Jonathan observed that a steward vacancy had been created as a result of Brenna Pammer stepping down from that role in order to serve as a trustee. Per the church bylaws, all stewards are required to be nominated by the pastor. For that reason, Pastor Jonathan nominated Debra Brubaker to the office of steward for the remainder of Brenna's unexpired term. This nomination was seconded by Esther Stauffer and, when put to a vote, passed unanimously. Debra Brubaker thereby joined the membership of the board.

The trustees also had no report.

With the board's numbers complete, the next required task – since this was the first board meeting after the annual congregational meeting – was the reorganization of the board.

- For the position of **board president**, Ken Bannon nominated Floyd Mast to another year as board president. This nomination was seconded by Del Ream. Once Floyd agreed to serve again if elected, and seeing no other nominations, the board voted unanimously for **Floyd Mast** as our 2024 board president.
- Next, for the position of **board vice president**, Esther Stauffer nominated Del Ream for another year as vice president. This nomination was seconded by Ken Bannon. Once Del agreed to serve again if elected, and seeing no other nominations, the board voted unanimously for **Del Ream** as 2024 vice president.
- For the position of **board secretary**, Ken Bannon nominated Sharon Mast to another year as board secretary. This nomination was seconded by Del Ream. Once Sharon agreed to serve again if elected, and seeing no other nominations, the board voted unanimously for **Sharon Mast** as 2024 secretary.
- For the position of **church treasurer**, Kim Sweigart nominated Esther Stauffer to another year as treasurer. This nomination was seconded by Joyce Garber. Once Esther agreed to serve again if elected, and seeing no other nominations, the board voted unanimously for **Esther Stauffer** as 2024 treasurer.

Under the heading of old business, the board turned its attention first toward plans for the March 30 pancake and sausage breakfast and Easter egg hunt event. Esther said that she was hoping for either the second or third Saturday in March (i.e., March 9 or March 16) for a group from the church to gather and make peanut butter eggs. After board members gave their feedback, by consensus the board agreed to schedule it for March 9 at 9:00am and to announce this in the bulletin. (*N.B.: Due to subsequent events, i.e., the funeral of Esther's uncle falling on that day, the egg-making session has been rescheduled to Friday, March 15.*) Additionally, Rebekah Brown distributed to the board copies of an advertisement for the March 30 event, which was given approval by consensus. (*See page 4.*)

Esther remarked that last year, having requested a donation of 150 sausages, which turned out to be 4" links instead of 5", we had run out of our sausage supply before the event ended, and were unable to meet demand. Esther asked the board if we wished to try to get more this year. Floyd suggested increasing our request by ten sausages. Esther said that she would ask, and also would verify the size also, although our donor has no control over that.

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Esther next asked when she should bring the boxes of plastic eggs which church attenders could fill with candy. Kim suggested that we would be ready for them at any time, and so Esther agreed to bring them the following Sunday. *(N.B.: All empty eggs have now been claimed, and many have already been brought back filled! Thank you!)*

Also on the same subject, Esther noted that the amount of pancake mix donated last year was so much that she was able to freeze the remainder, and she believed it would be enough to make this year's pancakes. She said that she would post up a sign-up sheet for all other requested donations for the breakfast. *(N.B.: This is now on the bulletin board in the street-facing narthex, and most if not all things have been pledged. Once again, thank you, everyone!)*

Rebekah asked a question about the dollar coins which we use as special prizes for the egg hunt. Rebekah had been under the impression that Henrietta Hoshauer had provided those, but Kim clarified that they are courtesy of Joyce Good, and that she gives five of them each year. Esther added that last year, there was one instance where two kids actually co-found one of the prize eggs, and since she didn't want them to have to fight over it, she went and obtained a sixth gold dollar so that each child would have one.

The board also discussed the role of the Easter bunny at the breakfast and egg hunt, and since neither Amy Hanna nor Cindy Ruth are able to take up the mantle again this year, the role fell to Kim Sweigart.

In old business unrelated to the upcoming breakfast, Del revisited a discussion she and Pastor Jonathan had had since the last board meeting about the idea of producing some larger-print editions of the sermons and newsletters for some of our members with worsening vision. However, she said, among people in the church she had asked, few of them trouble themselves to read any of our church material, so it probably wouldn't be worth the effort.

Under the heading of new business, Ken Bannon noted that Leon Hess had graciously offered to the church a hands-free microphone set up, which Esther displayed to the board. Pastor Jonathan and Rebekah said that they would test it out to evaluate it. *(N.B.: It was determined that the microphone would be more useful elsewhere, as it needs to be plugged into a compatible speaker which we do not have, and as the cord requires some attention. The board is, however, very grateful to Leon for the offer!)*

Barry Ream noted that our church needs to dig out some stumps from the ground. Floyd observed that, as a form of grounds maintenance, stump removal falls under the purview of the trustees and so would be discussed at a trustee meeting soon to be scheduled.

There being no further business after that, on motion of Barry Ream, as seconded by Del Ream, the board adjourned its meeting, to reconvene following the worship service on **Sunday, March 3, 2024.**

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### **Statistical Report (January 2024)**

<u>Worship Service Attendance</u>		<u>Offerings Received</u>
01/07/24	22	\$855.00
01/14/24	22	\$961.00
01/21/24	20	\$650.00
<u>01/28/24</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>\$410.00</u>
Average:	21	Total: \$2,876.00

<b><u>Birthdays (March 2024)</u></b>			<b><u>Anniversaries (March 2024)</u></b>
3/3 – Abby Eberly	3/4 – Jere Ringler	3/10 – Yvonne Styer	3/11 – Amos and Sally Arment
3/11 – Del Ream	3/14 – Barbara Sparr	3/18 – Clair Kohl	3/19 – Dennis and Barbara Kern
3/20 – Vera Kochel	3/31 – Cindy Bannon		

# Sausage and Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, March 30, 2024

7:00 AM - 10:00 AM



Come enjoy a delicious meal of  
pancakes & sausages!

Cost for breakfast is by free-will donation.  
Plus check out our bake sale table.

Breakfast to be followed by an

**EASTER EGG  
HUNT**



**@10 am!**



**LOCATION:**

**MT. CULMEN EC CHURCH**  
1885 Turkey Hill Road  
East Earl, PA 17519



## Upcoming Church Events

- **Peanut Butter Egg Making** – Those who would like to help us make peanut butter eggs and coconut cream eggs this year should aim to gather at the fellowship hall on Friday, **March 15**, 2024, at 9:00am.
- **Pancake-and-Sausage Breakfast, with Easter Egg Hunt** – Coming up on Holy Saturday, **March 30**, 2024! For more information, please see preceding page.
- **Easter Sunday Communion Service** – That's right, Sunday, **March 31**, 2024, is the holiest of feasts: Easter! Pastor Jonathan will celebrate the Eucharist and distribute Holy Communion via the ministry of the stewards. “On the Lord's Day, gather together to break bread and give thanks, first confessing your failings so that your sacrifice may be pure..., so that your sacrifice is not defiled” (*Didache* 14.1-2). “This food is called 'Eucharist' among us, of which it isn't lawful for anyone to partake except one who believes that the things that have been taught by us are true, and who has washed in the washing which is for the forgiveness of sins and for rebirth, and who lives in just the way that Christ handed down” (Justin Martyr, *I Apology* 66.1). So please come spiritually prepared, as the Apostle of our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ urges us: “*Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup*” (1 Corinthians 11:28).

## Upcoming Community Events

- **Concert** – On Wednesday, **March 6**, 2024, at the Garden Spot Village Chapel (433 South Kinzer Avenue, New Holland), at 7:00pm, the Cairn University Chorale (16 male and female students) will perform a concert featuring oratorios, hymns, and spiritual arrangements.
- **Lenten Lunches** – Each Thursday in Lent, St. John Center United Church of Christ (432 Reading Road, East Earl) will host a noon lunch (soup, sandwich, and dessert) in their social hall. These lunches, each with a different speaker, are sponsored by the churches of Terre Hill and Bowmansville. Each week, a free-will offering will be taken to benefit the Terre Hill Food Bank, the Terre Hill Skate Park, and Blue Ball Release Time. This year's overall theme is the Lord's Prayer. So don't forget to go on:
  - **March 7** (Rev. Tony Witmer, on “Give us this day our daily bread”),
  - **March 14** (Rev. Neal Martin, on “Forgive us our trespasses...”),
  - **March 21** (Rev. Sandy Gideon, on “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”),
  - **March 28** (Rev. Kevin Kirkpatrick, on “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory”).
- **Bingo** – On Sunday, **March 10**, 2024, at the American Legion (35 South Hoover Avenue, New Holland), the Eastern Lancaster County Library is hosting a bingo game starting at 2:00pm! Tickets are available at the library (or by calling 717-354-0525), to be purchased by March 5; play 20 bingo games for \$20, which will go to support the library. There will also be special games and a 50/50 drawing.
- **Concert** – On Monday, **March 11**, 2024, at the Garden Spot Village Chapel (433 South Kinzer Avenue, New Holland), a *cappella* men's quartet Southern End Ensemble will perform at 7:00pm.
- **Community Meal** – On Monday, **March 25**, 2024, 5:30pm to 6:30pm, CrossNet Ministries will provide a free community meal at their youth center (110 West Franklin Street, New Holland).
- **Good Friday Services** – The following local churches are among those who've advertised plans to hold a service of some kind on Good Friday, **March 29**, 2024. Those who are able to are encouraged to attend one.
  - **1:30pm** – Garden Spot Village Chapel (433 South Kinzer Avenue, New Holland)
  - **3:00pm** – Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church (150 Water Street, New Holland)
  - **3:00pm** – St. John Center Lutheran Church Cemetery (599 Reading Road, East Earl) – 20-min service
  - **6:30pm** – First Baptist Church of New Holland (149 West Conestoga Street, New Holland)
  - **7:00pm** – Petra Church (565 Airport Road, New Holland)
- **Terre Hill Easter Egg Hunt** – On Saturday, **March 30**, 2024, after you've finished up at our pancake-and-sausage breakfast, why not head over to Terre Hill Park (210 Lancaster Avenue, Terre Hill)? At Pavilion 1, food will be sold starting at 11:30am – burgers, hot dogs, soup, hot chocolate, coffee, etc. – and Easter egg hunts for kids 10 and under will begin at 1:00pm, followed by a juggling show at 1:45pm. If you're too old for that but want to get in on the fun, come back later by 8:00pm and there'll be a flashlight egg hunt for ages 11+ (including adults), with a \$30/person entrance fee but plenty of worthwhile prizes!

(Continued from Page 1, "Deathly Danger and Burning Bovines")

Other passages in the Books of Leviticus and Numbers talk about uncleanness or impurity. But now God is talking about the most severe kind of impurity Israel was going to have to guard against: death-impurity, the stench of death attaching itself to somebody and not letting go. In Israel, death-impurity attached to you if you touched a dead body, of course – which meant that anybody involved in carrying out a burial would suffer from it (19:11). Not only that, but even the bones of the long dead (whether Israelite or not), or even walking over a grave, infected a person with death-impurity (19:16). If somebody died in a tent, the space itself was filled with death-impurity; any uncovered pots were tainted, and so was anybody who stepped into that tent (19:14). If tents or graves weren't clearly marked, someone could even catch death-impurity without realizing it, at least at first.

Now, how bad was death-impurity, in Israel's eyes? Well, a person touched by death-impurity was *so* deeply impure that any object he or she touched would become contagiously unclean – not only would that item be unclean, but a person who then handled that item would become unclean until evening (19:22)! That's why later rabbis described a dead body as a 'father of fathers of impurity' – that is, it would pass on such severe impurity that anyone who had contact with the dead body became a 'father of impurity,' someone whose touch similarly defiled things. If I walk on a grave in ancient Israel, I catch death-impurity. Then, if I go home and touch the doorknob, the doorknob becomes unclean; anybody else who touches the doorknob will be defiled until evening.

This teaching, by the way, may seem strange to us. It's a taboo our culture doesn't share, although it has some little parallels to our hygienic mentality. (We may not fear 'death-impurity,' but we sure aren't keen on catching deadly diseases as a result of invisible germs!) But Israel lived in a world where many cultures had religions that involved a cult of the dead, where there was a strong impulse to fellowship with the dead. That's why Moses has to remind the people later that they mustn't try communicating with the dead or make offerings to the dead.

After this plague that struck the camp, all these bodies have to be buried. Over fourteen thousand dead is going to take a lot of manpower to remove and bury, isn't it? So tens of thousands of Israelites are now going to catch death-impurity. If they go back to their tents afterwards, they'll contaminate everything there. That's why anyone who has death-impurity (*"unclean through contact with the dead,"* 5:2) is banished from the camp, *"that they may not defile their camp, in the midst of which I dwell"* (5:3). If death-impurity isn't removed speedily from the camp, it spreads all the way to the holy heart: God's tent. A person who stays in the camp while death-impure *"defiles the Tabernacle of the LORD,"* and that is a severe sin that calls for being *"cut off from Israel"* altogether (19:13). Catching death-impurity isn't a moral no-no, but it has no place in God's holy presence. To bring it there is catastrophic sacrilege, so *"that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, since he has defiled the Sanctuary of the LORD"* (19:20).

What's worst is, death-impurity doesn't, at least in this chapter, seem to wear off naturally. So someone for whom no remedy is found must be cut off forever, because *"his uncleanness is still on him"* (19:13). If Israel doesn't find a solution, what will happen? What becomes of Israel if every Israelite is cut off? Israel will be excluded from God!

So, before even explaining how bad death-impurity is, the LORD tells Moses and Aaron how to be prepared for this common but extreme danger. He tells them to find a very specific animal: a reddish-brown cow fit for sacrifice and wholly set apart, from its childhood, from secular labor: *"a red heifer without defect, in which there is no blemish, and on which a yoke has never come"* (19:2). Eleazar, Aaron's son and the future high priest, must be the first one to take this cow outside the camp and sacrifice it as a sin-offering (19:3). A normal sin-offering was offered on the altar and then had its blood brought inside the Tabernacle (Leviticus 4:5-6). But this one is different. It's sacrificed outside the camp, not on the regularly appointed altar of sacrifice. Its blood isn't sprinkled inside the Tabernacle, but seven times just in the *direction* of the Tabernacle (Numbers 19:4). In an ordinary sin-offering of a bull, certain organs were then burned on the altar of burnt offering, and the blood was poured around the altar, while the rest of the bull – flesh, skin, limbs, innards – were taken outside the camp to be burned on a heap of firewood (Leviticus 4:10-12). Here, everything (even the cow's lifeblood) is burned together outside the camp, and onto the fire are tossed cedarwood, hyssop, and scarlet yarn (Numbers 19:5-6), famous items from Near Eastern purification rituals which were also used in cleansing lepers (Leviticus 14:6).

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As the ritual finishes up, the priest and whoever tended the actual fire will be made unclean until nightfall (Numbers 19:7-8). Think about that: this is a ritual so extreme that the high priest himself has to give up his clean status for a day – now that's a cost! No wonder Jewish sources all agree that this ritual was performed at most nine times in the entire history of the Jewish people, from the days of Moses on downward. What did Israel gain from this odd ritual of the burning bovine – the red cow burned with its red blood and the red wood tied with red yarn?

They gained a big pot full of ashes, that's what. A person in a state of cleanness was to gather up these ashes and put them in a ritually clean place outside of the camp (Numbers 19:9). In doing so, he gave up a measure of his own purity for the day, just as the priest did (19:10). These ashes, God explains to Israel, are going to be the key ingredient for solving death-impurity within Israel. *"For the unclean, they shall take some ashes of the burnt sin-offering, and living water shall be added in a vessel"* (19:17). That is, somebody clean will go fetch a small portion of these ashes and put them in a pot. Into that pot, flowing water will be poured over the ashes, making holy water.

*"Then a clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent and on all the furnishings and on the persons who were there and on whoever touched the bone or the slain or the dead or the grave"* (19:18). With hyssop – a branch that's great for sprinkling, which also was used to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifices in the Tabernacle – anything tainted by death-impurity could be sprinkled. *"And the clean person shall sprinkle it on the unclean on the third day and the seventh day. Thus on the seventh day he shall cleanse him, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and at evening he shall be clean"* (19:19). Death-impurity lifted! It just takes the holy water born from sacrifice, and time, and a good washing to finish the rest.

As we said before, the failure to do this ritual comes with extreme consequences. *"If the man who is unclean does not cleanse himself, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, since he has defiled the Sanctuary of the LORD. Because the water for impurity has not been thrown on him, he is unclean"* (19:20). But this ritual makes a way where there had seemed to be no way. Death-impurity can be washed away! Even those who had plunged into the realm of death, who had had death itself attach itself to them, can be made pure enough to live with the Holy God as a neighbor! All it takes is for a clean person to step in, equipped with this powerful remedy. But there is one further cost. The clean person who administers it? He *"shall be unclean until evening; and whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean, and anyone who touches it will be unclean until evening"* (19:21-22). To give cleansing to others, a clean person must become, even if temporarily, a source of defilement – much as the priest, the butcher, and the ash-collector had all become unclean in the course of preparing this purifying power.

Again, all of this probably seems pretty foreign. But the Bible isn't done with this. In the Book of Leviticus, God says something interesting. He refers to *"the dead bodies of your idols"* (Leviticus 26:30). Idols aren't merely inert objects. In some way, they can be seen as corpses – as original sources of death-impurity, or something very much like it. To worship an idol was to fellowship with a corpse, even if the idol was made of stone. It could not, God is saying, be done safely. And he would respond to it by making them more suitable partners, the dead for the dead: *"I will lay the dead bodies of the people of Israel before their idols, and I will scatter your bones around your altars"* (Ezekiel 6:5). Harsh words – but idolatry, as a very evil way to catch death-impurity, is no joke.

Later, when the Jewish nation returned to their land and rebuilt the Temple, God sent his prophet Haggai to go quiz the priests about two points of the law. First, *"if someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and if he touches with his fold bread or stew or wine or oil or any kind of food, does it become holy?"* (Haggai 2:12). In other words, can holy sacrificial meat transmit holiness two steps away, to fabric that then makes other food holy? The priests, rightly, say that it can't. But Haggai isn't done: *"If someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?"* (Haggai 2:13). In other words, if a dead human body touches a person, and that person then touches those same foods, will they be made unclean? Obvious, Numbers 19 tells us the answer is yes, and the priests say so. Holy meat can't send holiness two steps down the line, but a corpse sends its death-impurity that far. Now Haggai drives his point home: *"So it is with this people and with this nation before me, declares the LORD, and so with every work of their hands! And what they offer there is unclean"* (Haggai 2:14).

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(Continued from Page 7, "Deathly Danger and Burning Bovines")

Haggai – actually, the LORD inspiring Haggai – is making a very serious allegation: the entire community, Yehud, is death-impure! This people, this nation, are like walking corpses – sources of impurity. Not yet revived, their zombie hands are incapable of offering God anything that's good in his sight. The temple has not yet been rebuilt – only the foundation has been laid – because the people have not been obedient. But how can they begin to build a holy house with zombie hands? How can they worship a Holy God with their dead works? Yet *"from this day on, I will bless you,"* God surprisingly announces (Haggai 2:19). Exactly two months later, God relays to Zechariah his intention to *"again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem"* (Zechariah 1:17). In a vision, the prophet sees filthy garments stripped away from the high priest and replaced with purity (Zechariah 3:3-5). He then sees a vision of the iniquity of the whole nation being carried far away in a basket, flown far away to Babylon (Zechariah 5:5-11).

Now, in light of this, do you remember what Jesus tells the Pharisees? *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness! So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness"* (Matthew 23:27-28). *"Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without knowing it"* (Luke 11:44). The Pharisees, unbeknownst to all their admiring fans with whom they surrounded themselves, were sources of death-impurity! They prettied themselves up on the outside with beautiful works, but their hypocritical hearts were full of decay, Jesus is saying. Without a warning sign hanging on them, it was easy for people to think they were safe. Actually, they were unmarked graves. In ignorance, they contaminated Israel with the death-impurity of their hypocritical pride. As a result, these scribes and Pharisees were a serious danger to the nation, making it impossible for God to reside in their midst any longer. Catastrophic sacrilege!

Of course, the Gentiles were no better. A major reason why Jews of this era were so leery about entering Gentile homes was a fear that Gentiles commonly buried the dead in their homes, making them permanent death-impurity tents. (At least, that was a common perception.) A reason why they weren't inclined to share meals with Gentiles, on some occasions, was a fear of sharing utensils, bowls, food, etc., with someone who was assumed to be carrying death-impurity. And, indeed, whether Jew or Gentile, what does Paul tell us? *"You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked"* (Ephesians 2:1-2). Death-impurity had its grip on us all, and everything we touched.

The only way for salvation to come was for a high priest to prepare a strong sort of holy water, using the ashes of death to defeat death. So where did he go, on the night before he was betrayed? To the Garden of Gethsemane, to pray. Where was the Garden of Gethsemane? On the Mount of Olives. Why does that matter? Because the Mount of Olives is the place where, once Israel inherited its land, the priest would go to sacrifice and burn the red heifer! It was the precise 'outside-the-camp' place where these things were done, and from where they had a clear view toward the temple, to the mount's west, so that the priest could perform the ritual sprinkling in that direction.

Jesus, then, took himself to the Mount of Olives, where he sweat his drops of red blood onto the earth. Then, having gotten the same look toward Jerusalem that was the red heifer's last vision in life, he surrendered himself into the hands of his captors for a sacrifice. In the same way that the red heifer was killed and *"burned outside the camp, so Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood"* (Hebrews 13:11-12). The early Christians saw Numbers 19 as prophetic: "The calf is Jesus. ... Why, then, is the wool on the wood? Because the kingdom of Jesus is on the wood, and those who hope in him shall live forever. ... The children who sprinkle are those to whom he gave authority to proclaim the gospel, who announce to us the good news of the remission of sins and the purification of the heart" (Barnabas 8:2-5).

And this is our source of healing, the thing that overcomes the impurity of death in our hearts. *"For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God!"* (Hebrews 9:13-14). So, "if your person dies altogether today," Jacob of Serugh said, "the Church has a sprinkling that gives you life, if you desire." Thanks be to God, by his death, Christ became more than a red heifer, so that, by being sprinkled with his death in baptism, our hearts, becoming faithful, could be purified, sanctified, for God's eternal service! So as we venture through Lent this month toward Good Friday, think of the power of what Christ did: giving himself, he purified us from death!

## Featured Hymn: “Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem”

### English Lyrics

### Commentary by Pastor Jonathan

1. Ye choirs of New Jerusalem,  
Your sweetest notes employ,  
The paschal victory to hymn  
In strains of holy joy.
2. For Judah's Lion bursts his chains,  
Crushing the serpent's head,  
And cries aloud through death's domains  
To wake th' imprisoned dead.
3. Devouring depths of hell their prey  
At his command restore;  
His ransomed hosts pursue their way  
Where Jesus goes before.
4. Triumphant in his glory now  
To him all power is given;  
To him in one communion bow  
All saints in earth and heaven.
5. While we, his soldiers, praise our King,  
His mercy we implore,  
Within his palace bright to bring  
And keep us evermore.
6. All glory to the Father be,  
All glory to the Son;  
All glory, Holy Ghost, to thee,  
While endless ages run.

For this special Easter hymn, we have a medieval French bishop to thank. Fulbert of Chartres was born sometime between the years 952 and 970, probably to a noble family in northern France. By the 980s, he was a student in Rheims alongside the future French king Robert II. One of his teachers became pope as Sylvester II, from 999 to 1003. Later, in 1006, Fulbert was appointed as the new bishop of Chartres, a city about sixty miles southwest of Paris, and served into the late 1020s. A thousand years ago, Fulbert was there.

In addition to his poems and letters, Bishop Fulbert was known for his hymns, one of which was *Chorus novae Ierusalem*. It became a known Easter hymn in Latin, included in the *Sarum Breviary*. It was there that Robert Campbell found it and translated it into our English language in 1850 as “Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem.” (John Mason Neale also created his own version the year after that.)

This amazing hymn starts with us calling out to the “choirs of New Jerusalem” – the angels and saints in heaven – to tell them to use their very “sweetest notes” to celebrate Easter. We're telling heaven to sing a joyful hymn about Jesus' “paschal victory.”

The second verse clarifies what that paschal victory is about, using several images from the Bible. After the crucifixion, Jesus Christ had been killed, 'chained' by death. But now, “weep no more; look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah... has conquered!” (Revelation 5:5). “God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it” (Acts 2:24). In doing so, in rising from the dead, Jesus “crushed the serpent's head” – fulfilling the long-awaited promise in Genesis 3:15, as we'll hear in our March 3 sermon this month. He gains decisive victory over the devil!

We sing hear that the Lion roars throughout the realm of the dead to wake those who are in prison, and – as the third verse says – he commands the grave to surrender the dead. Those souls ransomed from death then follow Jesus in his ascension. Paul tells us that “when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive” (Ephesians 4:8). What a victory! Jesus set Death's prisoners free! And in that freedom, we have freedom, too!

The fourth verse focuses on the risen Jesus in glory. He sits enthroned in triumph, holding “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18). And so the entire host of the redeemed, “all saints in earth and heaven,” form just one communion bowing to our King of Kings. (What do we say in the creed every Sunday? “I believe in... the communion of saints,” that is, 'all saints in earth and heaven,' who still have fellowship with each other.)

The fifth verse points us back from heaven to earth. Here in this life, we are the King's soldiers, called to “share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:3). While the 'saints in heaven' have already retired to the King's palace in heaven, we on earth are still “fighting the good fight of the faith” (1 Timothy 6:12). We're a church still militant in the world, praying for mercy so that our King will one day count us worthy of sharing his victory.

The sixth and last verse of the hymn is a doxology, which – in good Christian fashion – blesses the entire Trinity, the three persons who are the one eternal God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All three of them deserve to be glorified infinitely and eternally – “all glory... while endless ages run!” The gateway to eternal glory is opened on Easter, the greatest of all feasts, the moment when a new creation burst forth into being. Thanks be to God for paschal victory!

## **Preaching Calendar (March – April 2024)**

Worship services commence at 10:00 AM on Sundays. We hope to see you there with us!

- March 3 (Lent 3):** Sermon Title: “The First Gospel”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 3:14-15  
“When by the Tempter's Wiles Betrayed” (insert)  
“Deceived by Subtle Snares of Hell” (insert)
- March 10 (Laetare Sunday [Lent 4]):** With Pastor Jonathan away March 5-12, Barry Heckman will preach.  
Sermon Title: “Do You Need to Watch Where You Step?”  
Scripture Reading: Num. 21:4-9 + Ps. 107:1-3,17-22 + Eph. 2:1-10  
“What Can Wash Away My Sin?” (254)  
“Amazing Grace” (278)
- March 17 (Lent 5):** Sermon Title: “Skins and Sins and Sons; or, Restating the World”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 3:20–4:2  
“Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy” (268 – vv. 1, 4)  
“Come, Every Soul by Sin Oppressed” (267)
- March 24 (Palm Sunday):** Sermon Title: “The Dawn of Sacrifice”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 4:1-4  
“All Glory, Laud, and Honor” (124)  
“Is Your All on the Altar?” (insert)
- March 31 (Easter Sunday):  
(Holy Communion)** Sermon Title: “Passing Over to Faith”  
Scripture Reading: Exodus 12:21-27 + 1 Peter 1:14-21  
“The Day of Resurrection” (160)  
“Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem” (insert)
- April 7 (Easter 2):** Sermon Title: “Counsel for Cain”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 4:1-7  
“Beset with Snares on Every Hand” (insert)  
“Out of My Bondage, Sorrow, and Night” (272)
- April 14 (Easter 3):** Sermon Title: “The Murderer and the Martyr”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 4:1-8  
“Blessed Feasts of Blessed Martyrs” (insert)  
“Glory Be to Jesus” (insert)
- April 21 (Easter 4):** Sermon Title: “My Brother's Keeper”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 4:8-10  
“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” (14)  
“Because I Have Been Given Much” (498)
- April 28 (Easter 5):** Sermon Title: “Murder and Mercy”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 4:8-16  
“Ah, What Can I Do?” (insert) – to the tune of hymn #17  
“Depth of Mercy! Can There Be” (253)
- May 5 (Easter 6):** Sermon Title: “The Downward Spiral”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 4:16-24  
“O for a Heart to Praise My God” (351)  
“Who Is On the Lord's Side?” (449)

## Quotes for Thought

“The Word... redeemed us rationally through his blood. He gave himself as a ransom for those who had been led into captivity. And since the Apostasy ruled over us unjustly..., the Word of God (who is all-powerful and not deficient in his justice) justly turned against the Rebellion itself and redeemed from it what is his very own. ... The Lord redeemed us by his blood, and gave his soul for our souls, and his flesh for our flesh...”

– St. Irenaeus of Lyons

*Against Heresies* 5.1.1 (c. AD 189), in *Ancient Christian Writers* 72:130

“Let us repent, therefore, and let us cease from our transgressions of old. Let us approach the merciful God, our eyes shedding tears in abundance ... The only-begotten Word of God... conquered by suffering, and showed us the death of his own flesh as the basis for our salvation. For he despoiled all of hell at once, opened the inescapable gates to the spirits of those asleep, left the devil there solitary and alone, and then rose on the third day, 'having loosed the pangs of death,' as is written, 'because it was not possible for him to be held by it' [**Acts 2:24**]. ... Let us practice mutual love, gentleness, humility, continence, and mercy toward the poor.”

– St. Cyril of Alexandria

*Festal Letter* 7 (AD 419), in *Fathers of the Church: A New Translation* 118:133, 135-136

“When in this fashion [*i.e.*, the crucifixion of Jesus] all the underpinnings of the world were askew in confusion and disorder and believed that they were tumbling down to the primordial darkness and the ancient chaos because of the death of its Creator, all of a sudden the Lord restored daylight by the light of his resurrection and refashioned the whole world into its original form, so that the world, which he saw had suffered with him to such an extent, he would raise up with him to his own glory.”

– St. Peter Chrysologus of Ravenna

*Sermon* 78.3 (c. AD 450), in *Fathers of the Church: A New Translation* 110:32

“Christ, who was free from sin..., died a death which he accepted on our behalf, and offered himself as an expiatory sacrifice to the Father against whom we sinned. ... Christ has also given us spiritual food ... It is this bread and wine that are changed into the body and blood of God. So the bread and wine are not a symbol for Christ's body (God forbid!), but that very same divinized body of Christ. For those who receive it fittingly, their communion brings a remission of sins, eternal life, and a defense of soul and body; but for those who receive improperly, damnation and punishment.”

– Theognostos, a Byzantine monk

*Treasury* 12.2-6 (AD 1253) in *Corpus Christianorum in Translation* 16:103-106

“Is it possible that any man should love another and not commend him...? ... Can it stand with this life of love to be always speaking about worldly affairs, or news at the best, both weekday and sabbath-day, in bed and at board, in good company and in bad, at home and abroad? I tell you it will be one main reason why you desire to live, that you may make the Lord Jesus known to your children, friends, acquaintance, that so in the ages to come his name might ring, and his memorial might be of sweet odor, from generation to generation. ... What the Lord hath taught thee, thou wilt talk of it unto others, for the sake of him whom thou lovest.”

– Thomas Shepard, Puritan minister in New England

*The Sound Believer: A Treatise of Evangelical Conversion* (R. Dawlman, 1649), 329-330

“You cannot get something for nothing. ... The Lord paid dearly to help us overcome the devil and our own weakness. The horrible temptations in the wilderness and the deep depression in the garden of Gethsemane were a heavy price to pay that we might conquer both ourselves and the devil. ... Christ's life as well as his death is necessary for our salvation. This should be a dear and frequent subject of our meditation. ... We meditate on a Lord who has died for our sin. He did not estimate the cost of our salvation. For him, it was beyond the power of thought. For us, may it be the call to repentance and newness of life!”

– Abraham Bertolet Markley, pastor of Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Lancaster

“A Sermon for Today: A Practical Sermon for Lent,” *Lancaster Sunday News* (9 March 1924): 5

## PRAYER GUIDE

- *We praise God* for all the wondrous blessings he's given us, most notably the ministry of his Son (in death, resurrection, and exaltation to the Father's right hand) and the gift of his Holy Spirit; and *we pray* that God would glorify his name above all else and would bring his kingdom more fully to earth.
- *We pray for our denomination, our congregation, and the church universal*, that God would bless us at all levels with faithfulness, wisdom, vision, and fortitude to earnestly labor in his vineyard.
  - *We pray particularly for* our pastor **Rev. Jonathan J. Brown** and for **our church board**.
  - *We pray also for* **our Evangelical Congregational Church leadership**: our bishop **Randy Sizemore**, executive director **Kevin Henry**, and district field director **Keith Miller**; the **Global Ministries Community** under **Ted Rathman**; the **Kingdom Extension Community** under **Mike Snedeker**; the **Church Health Community** under **Gary Kuehner**; the **Missional Alignment Community** under **Bishop Randy Sizemore**; and the **Ministerial Development Community** under **Matthew Hill**.
- *We pray for our missionary partners* (such as **Dan Quigley** and others), that God would keep them safe and faithful, would focus their efforts on God's work, and would grant success in accordance with his holy will.
- *We pray for other churches and pastors in our community*, that God would keep all congregations united in one holy faith and devoted to the ardent service of one and the same kingdom and of its King, Jesus.
- *We pray for the salvation of our whole community and its maturation in Christian discipleship*, knowing that there is hope in Jesus for all people and for entire communities to reflect the righteous love of God.
- *We pray for an end to disease outbreaks*: COVID-19, mpox, cholera, dengue, diphtheria, anthrax, flu, RSV.
- *We pray for those suffering in the wake of disasters around the world*, that God would have mercy:
  - *We pray for* those afflicted by natural disasters such as famine; wildfires in Chile, New Zealand, Texas, etc.; tornadoes in Indonesia; flooding in the Philippines; landslides in the Philippines, Georgia, Turkey.
  - *We pray for* those afflicted by accidents such as bus/truck accidents in Congo, Egypt, the Philippines, Spain, Tanzania, Honduras, South Africa, and Burkina Faso; boat accidents in Congo and Taiwan; helicopter crashes in Chile, Norway, and California; plane crashes in Florida; explosions in Kenya, California, and Virginia; fires in India and Spain; the oil spill in Tobago; the building collapse in Lebanon; bridge collapses in the Netherlands and China; the mine collapse in Venezuela; and the church balcony collapse in the Philippines.
- *We pray also for those victimized by violence and social ills, especially the Israel-Hamas war and Russian invasion of Ukraine*, that God would make his peace manifest to the injured, traumatized, and grieving.
  - *We pray additionally for* those afflicted by the Uyghur genocide in China; civil war in Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Sudan, Myanmar, etc.; India-Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan, Sudan-South Sudan, and Armenia-Azerbaijan conflicts; insurgency in Egypt, Colombia, Chad, Cameroon, Congo, the Maghreb, Nigeria, Niger, India, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Uganda, Mozambique, Pakistan, South Sudan, Turkey, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Peru, and Libya; ethnic violence in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere; gang/cartel wars in Mexico, Ecuador, and Haiti; protest-related violence in Senegal, Guinea, and elsewhere; mass shootings in Somalia, Georgia, Mexico, Greece, Israel, the West Bank, Gaza, Iran, Pakistan, Puerto Rico, Burkina Faso (at a church and mosque), Texas (at a church), Missouri, and Alabama; shootouts in Turkey and Mexico; assassinations in Ecuador and elsewhere; the mass stabbing in Austria; bombings in Somalia, Pakistan, and elsewhere; kidnappings; the humanitarian crisis in Gaza; the water pipeline sabotage in Greece; vandalism and attacks on churches; the American opioid epidemic; human rights violations (e.g., abortion and human trafficking); the rising wave of antisemitism; and the refugee crisis.
- *We pray for* all who serve and protect us, including **civic leaders, police, firefighters, medical responders, and members of the military**: May God keep them safe, just, wise, sincere, humble, and accountable.
- *We pray for our nation and its government* at all levels and in all branches, that God would move our leaders to repent of unjust or unmerciful practices and laws; that God would crown them with wisdom, security, peace, and civility toward all; and that God would give them godly hearts to live and govern rightly.
- *We pray for the persecutors and maligners of the church around the world*:
  - *We pray for* the conversion of terrorists and other people of violence into disciples of the Prince of Peace.
  - *We pray for* the wisdom of God to be made manifest to skeptics and critics.
  - *We pray for* the Spirit's boldness to fill the hearts of all believers to witness to Jesus in life and in death.

## PRAYER GUIDE

- *We pray for the families and friends of many who have entered their rest in the past year, including:*
  - For the families of **Leon Hartranft** and **Amanda Hoffert**, who entered rest on March 11, 2023.
  - For the family of **Lois Gift**, who entered rest on March 20, 2023.
  - For the family of **William Riegel** (Del Ream's brother-in-law), who entered rest on March 27, 2023.
  - For the family of **Darryl Imler** (Leroy Stoltzfus' nephew), who entered rest on April 1, 2023.
  - For the family of **Glenn Weber**, who entered rest on April 4, 2023.
  - For the family of **Clarence Jones** (Floyd Mast's uncle), who entered rest on April 11, 2023.
  - For the family of **Linda Wonder** (Sharon Mast's stepmother), who entered rest on April 27, 2023.
  - For the family of **John Herr** (Abby Eberly's friend), who entered rest on April 29, 2023.
  - For the family of **Sherry Stoltzfus** (Esther's sister-in-law's mother), who entered rest on May 4, 2023.
  - For the family of **Jim Brubaker**, who entered rest on May 5, 2023.
  - For the family of **Clarence Bauman** (Joyce Good's brother), who entered rest on June 17, 2023.
  - For the family of **Ben Schweitzer** (Kim Sweigart's son-in-law's friend), who entered rest July 10, 2023.
  - For the family of **Mary Martin** (Abby Eberly's friend's sister), who entered rest on July 15, 2023.
  - For the family of **Ray Snader**, who entered rest on July 17, 2023.
  - For the family of **John Kendig** (Sharon Mast's brother-in-law), who entered rest on July 19, 2023.
  - For the family of **Mary Skiba** (Sally Arment's cousin), who entered rest on August 20, 2023.
  - For the family of **Ivan Zimmerman** (Ray Snader's brother-in-law), who entered rest on August 22, 2023.
  - For the family of **Della Bollinger** (Floyd Mast's aunt), who entered rest on August 27, 2023.
  - For the family of **Harley Steenhoek** (the Walkers' grandpa), who entered rest on September 2, 2023.
  - For the family of **Elsie Martin** (Jean Hess's great-aunt), who entered rest on September 8, 2023.
  - For the family of **Clarence Good** (Jean Hess's uncle), who entered rest on September 13, 2023.
  - For the family of **Luke Ringler** (Abby's son-in-law's brother), who entered rest on September 25, 2023.
  - For the family of **Pat Street** (Nancy Mountz's sister), who entered rest on September 27, 2023.
  - For the family of **Daniel Newswanger** (Mabel's husband), who entered rest on October 8, 2023.
  - For the family of **Joyce Martin** (Jean Hess's cousin), who entered rest on October 11, 2023.
  - For the family of **Shirley Riggins** (Deb Messner's mother), who entered rest on October 13, 2023.
  - For the family of **Titus Burkholder** (Leon Hess's cousin), who entered rest on October 16, 2023.
  - For the family of **Erwin Sensenig Jr.** (Sally Arment's brother), who entered rest on November 7, 2023.
  - For the family of **Henrietta Hoshauer**, who entered rest on November 18, 2023.
  - For the family of **Bob Schade** (Cindy Ruth's uncle), who entered rest on November 23, 2023.
  - For the family of **Harvey Sauder**, who entered rest on November 25, 2023.
  - For the family of **David Kulp**, who entered rest on November 27, 2023.
  - For the family of **Bill Sprecher** (Sharon Mast's uncle), who entered rest on December 4, 2023.
  - For the family of **April Shirk** (Joan Swayze's daughter), who entered rest on December 7, 2023.
  - For the family of **Evaleen Weinhold** (Joan Swayze's aunt), who entered rest on December 16, 2023.
  - For the family of **Larry Fisher** (Abby Eberly's cousin's husband), who entered rest December 29, 2023.
  - For the family of **Dot Yohn** (Shirley's daughter's mother-in-law), who entered rest on January 3, 2024.
  - For the family of **Jace London** (Cindy Ruth's neighbor's great-grandson), who entered rest Jan. 19, 2024.
  - For the family of **Lori Zimmerman**, who entered rest on January 19, 2024.
  - For the family of **Eugene Martin** (Esther Stauffer's uncle), who entered rest on January 19, 2024.
  - For the family of **Donna Rhodes** (Cindy Ruth's sister-in-law), who entered rest on January 21, 2024.
  - For the family of **Noah Sauder** (Jean Hess's cousin), who entered rest on February 3, 2024.
  - For the family of **Miriam Burkholder** (Jean Hess's cousin), who entered rest on February 26, 2024.
  - For the family of **Renaldo Angeleni** (the Hesses' friend), who entered rest on February 27, 2024.
  - For the family of **Noah Wenger** (Esther Stauffer's uncle), who entered rest on February 28, 2024.
    - May the Lord give immeasurable peace, strength, and comfort to all who face loss and grief.

## **PRAYER GUIDE**

- *We pray for all dementia sufferers* and for **their caretakers**, that God would lighten burdens, restore clarity to injured minds, and speak directly to hearts and souls with his comfort, his peace, and the light of grace.
- *We pray for all suffering from cancer* – (including Randy Vandill, Cindy Ebersole, Troy Frey, Lisa Mast, Sue Stoltzfus [Lee and Martha's daughter-in-law], Betty Kennedy [Del Ream's niece-in-law], Earl Martin [Miriam Rissler's brother-in-law], Brandy Rhodes [Pastor Jonathan's cousin], Doris Snader, Gene Sensenig, Adrienne Hedges [Brenna Pammer's friend], Deana Bernardi [Floyd Mast's friend], Ray Boley [Joyce Good's friend], Matthew Lawrie [Sharon Mast's son's friend], Rev. Keith Miller, Rev. Marlin Lafferty, Rev. Don Wert, etc.) – that God shield them from pain, restore and comfort them, and bless their doctors.
- *We pray for the other assorted health concerns (and other needs) of:*
  - Earl and Pauline Good + John Good (Earl's brother) + David Good
  - Floyd Mast + Steven Mast (Floyd's son) + Cindy Bannon + Marilyn Wilson (Cindy's mother)
  - Barry Ream + Delores Jaxel + Clair Kohl + Jeff Kohl + Henry Kohl + Shawn and Candace Sweigart
  - Cherri Snader + Jim Becker + Larry and Cookie White + Grayson Sweigart (Kim's grandson)
  - Dennis Burkholder + Wilmer Burkholder + Linda Burkholder + Mary Andrews + Raymond Bannon
  - Barty Messner + Edna Binner + Miriam Rissler + Ed Diem
  - Vera Kochel + Brandon Wilson + Floyd Heuyard + Betty Musser
  - Violet Stauffer + Paul Ford + Becky Wallace + Emma 'Tiny' Shirk
  - Jerry Felpel and Doris Getz + Dawn Acevedo (Cindy Hoffer's sister)
  - Josh Kendig (Sharon Mast's son) + Connie Dieter (Leon and Jean Hess's daughter)
  - Larsen Houck (Shirley Good's great-grandson) + Kayley Smith (the Hesses' granddaughter)
  - Kathryn Shirk (Jean Hess's aunt) + Sonya Shirey (Jean's friend)
  - Ray Arment + Butch and Mike Skiba + Emily Sensenig + Jeannine Sensenig
  - Sharon Geib (Deb Kimmel's sister) + Alice Vidzicki (Deb's friend's mother)
  - Veanna Baxter + Julia Reed (Veanna's sister)
  - Jeremy Kurman + Warren Weinhold + Jody Freeman
  - Jess Pennepacker + Charles Yingst + Ralph Mountz
  - Carl and Grace Nolt + Don Pickle + Carl Martin
  - Robert and Barbara Sparr + Rodger Whittaker
  - Abby Eberly + Linda Sweitzer (Abby's friend)
  - Elizabeth Zimmerman (John Eberly's sister)
  - Dorothy Long (Sharon Mast's boss's sister)
  - Dennis Wanner + Shirley Buchanan
  - Madelynne Walker + Ben + Tim
  - Gloria Hoffman + Minerva Hufford
  - Troy Frey and both of his parents + Tory Lingg
  - Ken Keen and Nancy Fox (Floyd Mast's friends)
  - Donna Sensenig + Larry Sensenig + Daryll Sensenig
  - Bob Buckwalter (Abby Eberly's friend's husband)
  - Delores, Jeremiah, and Bobby Snader + Ben Doullin + Shirley Sweigart
  - Linda Talbot (Cindy Ruth's sister) + Tom Schwer (Sharon Mast's stepbrother)
  - Rebecca Lucas (the Walkers' family friend) + Rebecca Horst + Dillon Dewire
  - Ken Styer + Bret Hoffert + Jethro Hursh + Larry and Cookie White (the Hesses' friends)
- *We pray for other neighbors, friends, and believers in need*, that God would heal, provide, and comfort.
- *We pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit* upon our church, our community, our county, our nation, the Evangelical Congregational Church, and the church universal. *We pray for the whole church to be filled with a spiritual zeal for worship, evangelism, and discipleship. May the fires of revival fall!*
- *We praise God for all the prayers we've seen him answer and for his everlasting faithfulness!*